MEDOC MOUNTAIN
STATE PARK halifax county, n.c.

CREDITS

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MEDOC MOUNTAIN MASTER PLAN

Foreword

The primary objective in preparing a master plan for Medoc Mountain State Park is to provide a development plan and program compatible with the nature of the site. It is essential that the plan be unified physically and in such a way that administrative services and operations can be provided efficiently.

In addition, the master plan speaks to the optimum carrying capacity of the site for all of its proposed activities and facilities with respect to the maintenance of the desired park character. It remains a flexible plan inasmuch as development need not reach its final phase if follow-up analysis indicates expansion is undesirable. Development is contingent upon the availability of funding and the establishment of biennial statewide priorities. A review of the impact of site development and visitor use should be conducted after each development phase, insuring long-range protection of the natural resource.

As a matter of policy, the same principles which were used as a basis for the development of this plan — for governing the establishment, extension, and development of the State Park System — should be used in making decisions which affect the welfare of Medoc Mountain State Park.

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INTRODUCTION

MEDOC MOUNTAIN

Being near the Fall Line, the land forming influences of the Piedmont and the Coastal Plain have both had their effect in the formation of the Medoc Mountain area. The very old crystalline rocks of the Piedmont generally dip eastward beneath the sedimentary formations of the Coastal Plain. The "mountain" itself has been identified as a biotite granite formation that has effectively turned the generally southeastward-flowing streams of the area around itself and has resisted the alluvial and marine erosion typical of the surrounding lowlands.[24]

Medoc Mountain is not really a mountain at all. It is, rather, a long ridge, trending generally north-south in the western part of Halifax County, approximately 15 miles south of Roanoke Rapids along N. C. 48. The Mountain has very steep slopes along its northern and western faces, where it drops about 160 vertical feet over a horizontal distance of less than ¼ mile. Despite the fact that the two highest points are only 325 feet in elevation, the rugged nature of the terrain is unusual for a Coastal Plain area.[2]

History and Existing Uses

The Mountain and its surrounding land area was once the property of Sidney Weller, a noted farmer and educator. Weller is given credit for developing the "American System" of grape culture and wine making, having developed a wine named Weller's Halifax. His property extended from the intersection of N. C. 48 and S. R. 1002 to Little Fishing Creek, with the vineyards being located along the ridge paralleling S. R. 1002.[18]

Weller was recognized as a "book farmer", who experimented with crop rotation and fertilizing. He also organized and operated an academy for area children and assisted with the development of the first state fair in 1853. During his tenture of ownership, the peak was supposedly given the name "Medoc" for a French Province famous for its commercial grape vineyards.

After his death in 1854, the vineyards were sold by his widow to Charles and Mary Garrett, and the remaining land was subdivided among neighboring landowners. The Garrett's operated the vineyard through the late 19th and early 20th century, and a winery in Weldon. According to folklore, they used Weller's strains of grapes in the development of their own wine recipes.

After the demise of the Garrett winery, the vineyards were subdivided and converted for other agricultural crops. A large percentage of land east and west of Medoc Mountain was put into cultivation. Through the years all evidence of the vineyard gradually disappeared.[18]

During the 1930's, the Mountain forest was cut for its commercial value, and a Boy Scout camp was developed on the peak. Several camp buildings were constructed and the stream that meanders around the Mountain was impounded for a swimming pond. Also, a molybdenum deposit was identified, and officially explored in 1943-1944, and again in the late 1960's. The 1943-44 exploration was conducted by the U. S. Bureau of Mines as part of their program for developing supplies of metals in short supply. The later explorations were conducted by large private mining companies. Apparently, no commercial ore bodies were proven during the explorations.[8]

Traditionally the rough terrain around the Mountain has been used by local residents for hunting, horseback riding, and hiking. The topography has prohibited farming on the steep slopes east of Little Fishing and Bear Swamp Creeks. However, the gently sloping terraces west of Medoc Mountain along S. R. 1322 have been extensively cultivated. Several small homesteads exist along this state-maintained dirt road, and a large tract on the northern end was clear-cut several years ago. Many of these old fields have been replanted in tightly spaced pine forests.

To the east along N. C. 48, Medoc Mountain is also bounded by agricultural fields. Many of these fields were originally part of the old Weller vineyards. They extend westward until the topography becomes too severe for farming. Numerous fields along this ridge are still in active tobacco production.

S. R. 1002, at the intersection of N. C. 48, is said to be the general vicinity of the Weller vineyards. Along this state road, many local residents have settled. Several farms have extensive land holdings while most are single family home sites. One home is worthy of mention, the Matthew's House. It dates back to the

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late 18th century, and remains in relatively good condition. "The Matthew Place, locally called 'Ivy Hill', consists of two equally interesting structures — a late Georgian dwelling with a well-preserved traditional exterior and interior, and a robust Greek Revival Side-hall addition."[5] The house is currently on the National Register of Historic Places.

Access to Medoc Mountain exists along a state-maintained dirt road, S. R. 1323. A fire tower operated by the N. C. Division of Forest Resources, is located at the junction of this road and S. R. 1002. Originally a trail, this access was widened when the Scout Camp was developed and core drillings were made of the molybdenum deposit.

Numerous trails north of Medoc Mountain exist and have been maintained by hunters, horseback riders and hikers. Several of these old trails lead north from the Mountain to N. C. 561, while others are old farm roads that emanated from home sites along N. C. 48 to isolated fields. Still other trails, those along Bear Swamp and Little Fishing Creeks are recreational in origin, having been game and hiking trails.

Much of the area has been cut over for merchantable timber, including Medoc Mountain. However, most of the areas are experiencing a regrowth of timber. Much of the area and especially the Mountain, possesses some fine forest land and has regained its wilderness character.[8]

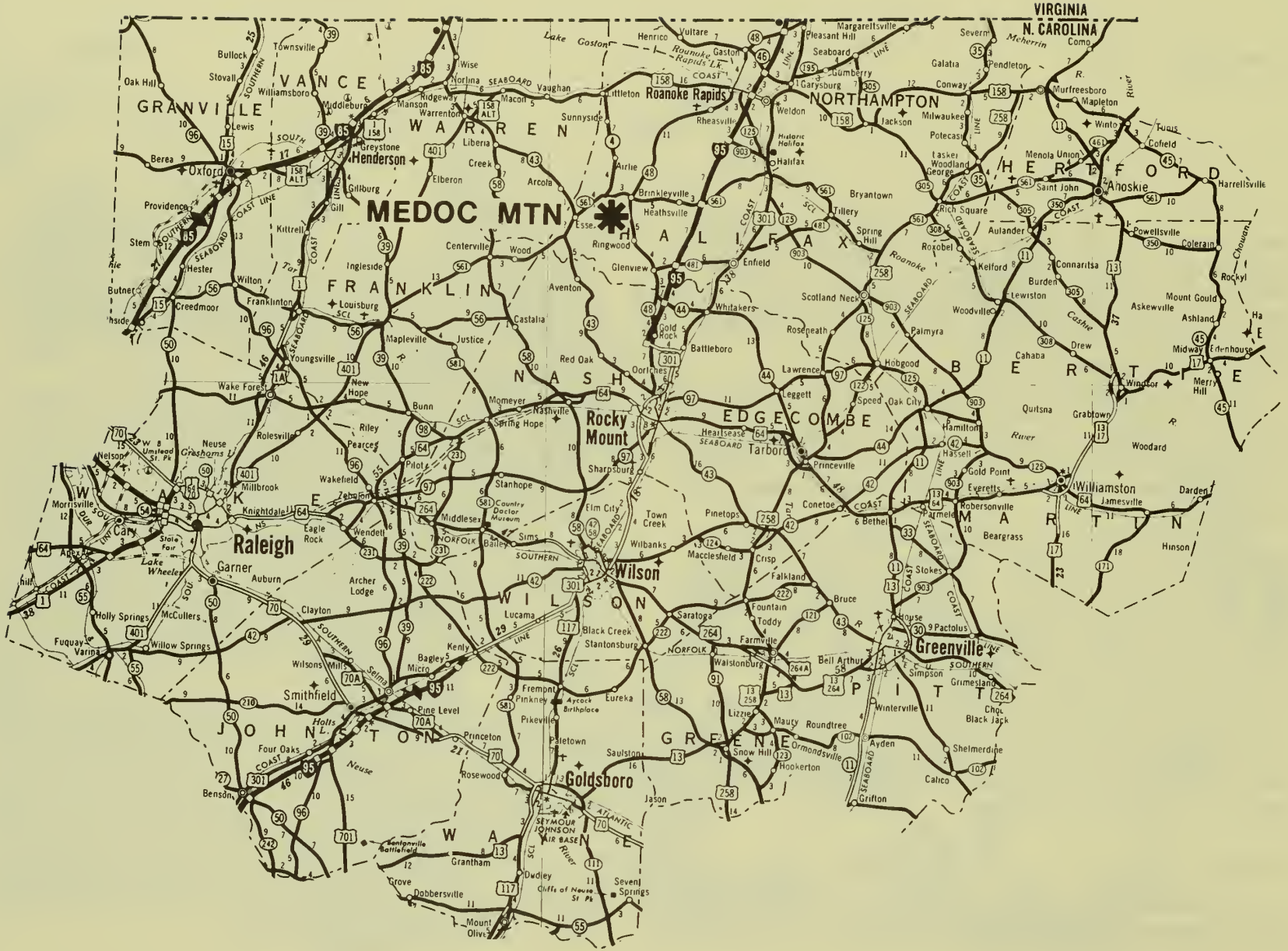
A State Park

On September 12, 1970, a Nash County area delegation made a proposal to the Board of Conservation and Development that the planned Tar River Reservoir be developed as a state park. Unfortunately, the site did not qualify as a state park. However, recommendations from the Board stated that a park should be located in this general region of the State if a suitable site could be identified.

The following December, the Region L Council of Governments officially extended a request for a state park to be located within the region. At a subsequent meeting in February 1972, with the Region L Council of Governments, the Division of State Parks agreed to engage in a survey of the region, which included Edgecombe, Halifax, Nash, Northampton, and Wilson Counties.

Following an exhaustive search for sites, the Division's report was published May 12, 1972, recommending (1) the acquisition of Medoc Mountain and 3,000 acres of surrounding land for a state park, (2) the designation of Fishing Creek as a Natural and Scenic River, and (3) establishment of a park corridor from Medoc Mountain to Fishing Creek via Little Fishing Creek.

The concept was supported by Region L and the State Parks Committee, and a show of good faith was extended by the Halifax Development Commission by their acquisition of a one year option to purchase the standing timber on the Medoc Mountain tract. Thus, Union Camp was prevented from cutting the 147 acre tract for one year, until August 15, 1973. This action allowed State Parks the time necessary to develop an acquisition plan for the area. By November of the following year, acquisition was underway and 2,300 acres had been purchased by March of 1975.[8]


VIRGINIA
N. CAROLINA
MEDOC MTN
Henderson
Roanoke Rapids
Rocky Mount
Wilson
Goldsboro
Greenville
Raleigh
Oxford
Tarboro
Williamston
Smithfield
Lake Gaston
Roanoke Rapids Lk.
Meherrin River
Roanoke River
Tar River
Neuse River
Chowan River
Cashie River
Pamlico River
VANCE
GRANVILLE
WARREN
FRANKLIN
NASH
HALIFAX
NORTHAMPTON
HERTFORD
EDGECOMBE
MARTIN
WILSON
JOHNSTON
WAYNE
GREENE
PITT
BERTIE
WAKE
Seaboard Coast Line
Southern
Norfolk Southern
Atlantic Coast Line
Seaboard
Seymour Johnson Air Base
Bentonville Battlefield
Cliffs of Neuse St. Pk.
Lake Wheeler
Crabtree Valley Mall
Country Doctor Museum
Aycock Birthplace
Historic Halifax

REGIONAL RECREATION NEEDS

Medoc Mountain State Park lies on the somewhat recreationally deficient Piedmont/Coastal Plain line, the Coastal Plains and Appalachian regions possessing respectively about three to five times as much State Park acreage. There is at present no other state park in Region L.

Medoc Mountain is designated as a North Carolina State Park (Bureau of Outdoor Recreation Class III: Natural Environmental Areas) in response to important considerations of location, natural environment, and public demand.[16] Recreation potential for state parks in Region L, as evaluated by the Soil Conservation Service, is generally rated medium to high for such natural determinants as climate, water quality, soils, etc., particularly in Halifax County where Medoc Mountain is located.[22] Sited along Fishing Creek (proposed as a North Carolina Natural and Scenic River), the unique rolling topography is in sharp contrast to the Coastal Plain norm. The 2,300 acres of Medoc Mountain exist as an excellent natural wildlife area, possessing characteristic geologic features, and offering potential for camping, hiking, horseback riding, and nature study. Fishing Creek itself has escaped much pollution, and is noted for excellent fishing, and canoeing.

Both Medoc Mountain and Fishing Creek have been included in Region L's Outdoor Recreation and Open Space Plan. The Region L Council of Governments ranks Medoc Mountain State Park at the first of three priority levels for action, in part because Halifax County is the most deficient in open space. The fact that private or commercial interests operate 94% of the Region's recreation lands means that most recreation is available only for a fee or through membership. The remaining local neighborhood, city and county facilities are only able to meet 18% of user demand. In addition, Region L has one of the lowest ratios of recreation acreage per capita (0.14) in the State.[19] For this reason, the N. C. State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan recommends the location of one district park of 80 acres, and the inclusion of approximately 500 acres for county parks in addition to the amount needed for a state park.

The 1974 North Carolina Outdoor Recreation Standards proposes 20 acres of state park land per 1,000 persons. Projected 1990 Region L population figures estimate a need for 3,767 acres of State Park.[16] Medoc Mountain also lies within the desired one hour's drive of the fourteen regional growth centers outlined by the State. A fifty mile radius around the park encompasses Granville, Vance, Warren, Northampton, Halifax, Edgecombe, Nash, Franklin, Wilson and portions of Person, Durham, Wake, Johnston, Greene, Pitt, Martin, Bertie and Hertford Counties. Included in this zone of influence are the population centers of Raleigh, Durham, Wilson, Rocky Mount, Roanoke Rapids, and Henderson. This involves approximately a million citizens and places 17% of the State's population within one hour of a potential new state park. If this radius is increased to 75 miles (approximately 1½ hour drive) the cities of Chapel Hill, Goldsboro, Kinston, Greenville, and Washington are included, increasing the number of people affected to 1,254 or about 18% of the State's population.[17]

Purpose of the State Park System

The purpose of the North Carolina State Park System shall be to serve the people of North Carolina and their visitors by:

1. Preserving and protecting natural areas of unique or exceptional scenic value not only for the inspiration and benefit of the present generation, but, also for generations to come.
2. Establishing and operating state parks that provide recreational use of natural resources and outdoor recreation in natural surroundings.
3. Portraying and interpreting plant and animal life, geology, and all other natural features and processes included in the various state parks.
4. Preserving, protecting and portraying scientific sites of statewide importance.

General Principles

To assure the accomplishment of this basic purpose in accordance with the best standards, state park sites of the North Carolina State Park System shall be limited to:

1. State parks which evaluated on a state-wide basis, possess unique or exceptional scenic value. By exceptional scenic value is meant rare natural scenery, which is unlikely to be preserved for the benefit and enjoyment of the public in this and future generations if the property remains in private ownership, and which is sufficiently distinctive to attract and interest people from distinct parts of the State as well as local people.
2. State parks which possess distinctive scenic values and excellent opportunities for the development of facilities for active recreational use of natural resources and excellent opportunities for the study of natural history. A state park site (other than scientific sites) should possess both scenic and recreational values. In some sites exceptional scenic values may be sufficient to overcome the lack of recreational possibilities, and in other sites unusual recreational possibilities may make up for a lack of scenic values. By unusual recreational values is meant features such as topography, trees, vegetation, streams, lakes or ocean shore offering recreational possibilities which would attract and interest people of a wide surrounding area and would not be available to the public if the property remained in private ownership. The state parks should be sufficient in number, size, development, operation and maintenance to adequately serve the needs of all the people of the State over and above the facilities which are or should be provided by local city, town and county parks.

Size Requirement

Every state park site shall be of sufficient size to:

1. In the case of state parks possessing unique or exceptional scenic value:
   (a) completely include the scenic or natural features the area is established to protect and preserve;
   (b) provide sufficient buffer area to protect the scenic or natural features from outside influences or encroachments;
   (c) provide a reasonably satisfactory habitat for indigenous wildlife; and
   (d) permit the development of recreational and public use areas if these can be provided without damage to or impairment of the primary purpose of preserving the scenic or natural features, and if geographic location or public need justify development of such areas. Under normal conditions, 400 acres of land well adapted to state park use and development shall be considered as a minimum size for each state park site possessing unique or exceptional scenic values.
2. In the case of state parks possessing distinctive scenic values and excellent recreational opportunities:
   (a) completely include the distinctive scenic features of the area and, if possible, one or more complete landscape units;
   (b) provide sufficient buffer area to protect the distinctive scenic features from outside influences or encroachments;
   (c) amply accommodate the recreational and public use developments required to meet present and future

public needs and to accommodate these developments in such a way that various types of public use will not interfere with each other or destroy the effect of a natural environment; and

(d) provide extensive use amid unspoiled and relatively unmodified natural surroundings. Under normal conditions, 400 acres of land well adapted to state park use and development shall be considered as a minimum size for each state park site.

Development

State parks possessing unique or exceptional scenic value shall receive only such development as is necessary to protect and preserve the scenic and natural values, provide public access, protect public health and provide adequate interpretive programs, and the development of such other recreational and public use facilities as can be provided to meet justifiable public needs without damage to or impairment of the scenic and natural values. All developments shall be planned and executed so as to in no way impair, damage or detract from the scenic or natural values which the areas were established to preserve and protect.

State parks possessing distinctive scenic values and excellent opportunities for the development of facilities for active recreational use of natural resources shall receive all development required to protect and preserve the distinctive scenic values, provide public access, protect public health, provide recreational use of natural resources and provide adequate interpretive programs. Development for public use of natural resources shall primarily include facilities for such outdoor activities as picnicking, swimming, boating, fishing, hiking, nature study and camping, and for vacation use when desirable.[7]

PHYSIOGRAPHY

TOPOGRAPHY

The Coastal Plain is composed of a series of seven terraces, each representing a former floor level of the Atlantic Ocean. These terraces have elevations above sea level which range from much less than 25 feet on the inland shore line of the easternmost terrace to 270 feet or more where the westernmost terrace merges with the Piedmont Plateau.

Medoc Mountain is located in the general land classification referred to as the upper coastal plain. This unit comprises the two highest and most inland terraces. The overall relief is undulating to rolling, becoming strongly rolling along streams, and the drainage is well established.[10]

GEOLOGY

In the western part of Halifax County, belts of gneiss, granite, and slate and schist are present that trend in a north-south direction. Eastward these crystalline rocks dip beneath the land surface with a slope of 15 or 20 feet to the mile and forms the basement or floor upon which much younger sediments of the coastal plain were deposited. Geologically, this occurrence is defined as the "Fall Zone."[23]

Medoc Mountain has been identified as a Biotite Granite, having a mixture of hornblende, iron minerals (hematite and pyrite), and a molybdenum deposit.[24] Molybdenum is a rare metal used primarily in steel alloys.

West of the Mountain, the metamorphic deposits of the piedmont terrace dominate. Argillites, diabase dikes, hornfels, and volcanic andesite are present along with the alluvial floodplain deposits. East of Little Fishing Creek as it passes through park property, the coastal plain deposits, interspersed by intrusive Gabbro and diabase dikes, prevail.[24]

Overlying and in direct contact with the crystalline bedrock are the sand and clay strata of Cretaceous Age. Because the lower contact with bedrock dips eastward, 15 or 20 feet to the mile, and the upper contact with the overlying Yorktown formation of Miocene Age is nearly horizontal, it thins rapidly to the west. The Yorktown formation overlies the Cretaceous and extends a few miles westward of it, so that the only exposures of the Cretaceous deposits are along Fishing Creek and Roanoke River. The Yorktown is probably not more than 60 to 70 feet thick within the county.[23]

GROUND WATER

Nearly all domestic water supplies, a number of industrial supplies, and four of the six municipal supplies are obtained from wells. The principal source of domestic supplies is shallow wells.

In the western part of the county, most of the wells are dug and are from 30 to 60 feet deep. These wells yield water from the weathered crystalline bedrock or from the sandy clays of the high-level gravels. Through the central part of the county, both dug and bored wells are used. Bored wells are used mainly where the terrace deposits are thick and permeable enough to furnish a satisfactory supply without the necessity of depending on the larger storage capacity of the dug wells. Where the material is very fine and clayey and of very low permeability, dug wells predominate. Through the major part of the county, bored and driven wells are most common. A few dug wells are also used in this area, especially where the terrace deposits contain a considerable amount of clay.

Most of the drilled wells obtain their water from the crystalline bedrock, and a few get their water from relatively shallow sands and gravels at the base of the terrace deposits. Of the wells drilled in the crystalline rock, a very low percentage yielded less than 2 gallons a minute. All of these low-yield wells were drilled in granite, a very unproductive formation.

Few of the wells in the crystalline rocks yield more than 20 or 25 gallons a minute, and, if larger supplies are needed, the chances are that more than one well will be necessary. It may be noted that all the failures were in granite, and in general, the wells in the slate, schist, and gneiss yield more satisfactory supplies than in the granite. It appears that relatively shallow wells are the most satisfactory, either utilizing a number of well points in a "well field" which can be pumped by one centrally located pumping plant or using one or more gravel-walled wells.

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A few wells, from 40 to 80 feet deep, obtain their water from the Yorktown formation, but even the more sandy strata contain so much clay as to be nearly impermeable.[23]

There are a number of small springs in western Halifax County, a few of which are used for domestic supplies. One artesian source was exposed by core-drilling for molybdenum on the west side of Medoc Mountain. The source has been free flowing since drillings were completed in the 1960's.

The analyses of water from the crystalline and sedimentary rocks are considered characteristic of the area. All samples were soft, having insignificant amounts of iron, chloride, and bicarbonate, allowing use as a water source.

SURFACE WATER

Medoc Mountain Park is dissected by two major tributaries of Fishing Creek, Little Fishing and Bear Swamp Creeks. At their confluence they have a drainage area of 175 square miles, and an average volume of 148 cubic feet per second.[1]

The water quality of the 1.5 mile section of Little Fishing Creek that runs through the Park has been classified "A-II", fit for recreational purposes. However, the section of Bear Swamp Creek from Butterwood Creek to the Park has been classified "C". Littleton operates a waste treatment plant on Butterwood Creek that discharges into the creek 12 miles upstream from the park. Low amounts of dissolved oxygen have been recorded along with a low pH reading and high coliform counts, thus making this part of Bear Swamp unfit for recreational purposes.[1]

Tributaries of Bear Swamp Creek on park property generally have steeper gradients and form a rectangular drainage pattern. Their water temperatures are also cooler than the average of 21°C recorded in Bear Swamp. Two major tributaries of Bear Swamp affect the park. These streams are unnamed and have no water classification. They drain land east of Bear Swamp Creek, park property and farmland along the ridge. These streams appear to be relatively pure; however, an undetermined amount of pollution from agricultural runoff is being deposited in the streams.

CLIMATE

Climatic records taken from the nearest station at Enfield, North Carolina, indicate that the area has a mild and uniform climate. The mean annual temperature is 60.3°F. with a mean daily high of 72.8°F. and a mean daily low of 47.7°F. August is the warmest month with an average of 78.8°F. while December and January average 42.3°F.

The mean annual precipitation is 42.36 inches per year. June tends to be the wettest month with an average of 8.26 inches. The month with the lowest precipitation is October with an average of .31 inches.

For the major part of the year, the winds are from the southwest except in September and October when they are from the northeast. Wind speed is variable, but a velocity of seven to eight miles per hour is common. High-speed destructive winds are not frequent but do occur in this area. These are associated with thunderstorms and with occasional tornadoes and hurricanes.

For the most part, climate is not a limiting factor for recreational activities. Warm weather months begin with April and extend into parts of October. The winters are mild for the most part, and do not prohibit such activities as hiking, horseback riding, and camping for hardy individuals. Unusually heavy periods of rain are not common, the area being relatively free of major storms (hurricanes and tornadoes).[4]

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SOILS AND SLOPES

Nearly all the soil materials of the Coastal Plain region were laid down in horizontal or gently sloping beds. Coarser materials predominate on the western edge of each terrace near the old shoreline. The finer materials, which are farther to the east and southeast, were deposited in deeper water. In general, the soils of the northern half of the Coastal Plain contain a moderately high portion (more than 55%) of very fine sand, silt, and clay combined. The differences in geologic parent materials as influenced by relief are the basis for the classification of soils in the Coastal Plain.[10]

Alluvial and Terrace Soils

Stream Terrace soils formed of Piedmont material extend into the Coastal Plain region in many places, particularly in Northampton, Halifax, and Bertie Counties.

The dominant soil in the association is Wickham, which is well drained and has light-brown loam or sandy loam surface material and brown to reddish-brown firm clay subsoils. Other important soils are the well drained to moderately well drained Altavista, and the somewhat poorly drained Augusta. The important bottomland soil series are the well drained Congaree, somewhat poorly drained Bibb, and the poorly drained Johnston. All bottomland soils are subject to complete flooding about once every two or three years. Many of the Terrace soil areas have been covered with flood waters three times since 1920. The Wickham soils occupy slopes having gradient ranges between 2 and 5%. The other soils are mostly nearly level to gently sloping, or with gradients between 1 and 3%. There is an accelerated erosion problem on many areas of the Wickham soils, and to some extent also on a few areas of the Altavista.[6]

Upland Soils

In general, the soils occupying undulating or sloping relief (gradients above 3%) are well drained, and have coarse-textured surface soils and medium to fine-textured subsoils which have yellowish, brownish, or reddish colors. These soils under the native woodland cover contain very little organic matter, usually less than 3 percent in the surface four-inch layer.

The Nason series is located on gently to strongly sloping uplands. Slopes are generally 6-12 percent and range from 2 to 25 percent. The surface soil is coarse textured and has a clayey subsoil with yellow-red or yellow-brown color. This series is usually well drained.

The Tatum series occupies the nearly level to sloping uplands on the site. Slopes range from 2 to 10 percent. This soil was formed in medium to moderately fine textured coastal plain sediments. The surface soils are grayish-brown loam, and the subsoils are a yellow-brown sandy clay loam. This series is also well drained.[6]

Most other soil limitations are based on slope. This is the major limiting factor for recreational development on the site. About one-fourth of the park consists of slopes greater than 15%. For all practical purposes, such slopes are considered unusable for any park facilities or activities. Some activities, particularly trails, can be accommodated on slopes of 11-15%. Most activities and facilities can occur on 6-10% slopes, while virtually no development limitations occur on 0-5% slopes.[22]

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PLANT COMMUNITIES AND WILDLIFE

Open Fields

Much of the land on the fringes of the park was in agricultural use a short time ago. When these fields are abandoned, nature begins its take-over immediately. The younger fields in the area, some of which still show plow marks and withered cornstalks, are dominated by fast-growing but short-lived annuals and biennials, characteristic of the Medoc area and typical of the Upper Coastal Plain — plants adapted to the periodic extreme dryness of sandy soils exposed to direct sunlight and considerable erosion. Although few of these pioneer plants are particularly showy, the tiny deep-red flowers of Sheep-Sorrel or Sourgrass and the pale blue flowers of Toadflax when seen in aggregate in late spring often produce colorful "patches" in the young fields and along the roadsides. Several species of Goldenrods and Asters put on quite a show in the fall.

After 3 or 4 years of uninterrupted reclamation, nature begins to cover the fields with more substantial ground-covers. The older fields in the Medoc area sport a heavy growth of the tall Horseweed, followed within a year by such "desirables" as the highly edible Blackberries and the equally good Chickasaw Plum. Many grasses, particularly Fescue and Broom-Sedge, are well-established by this time. If the field was used for pasture rather than cropland, the grasses actually get a head start on the annuals.

Old fields are the favored areas of Bobwhite Quail, Rabbits, and many songbirds, owing to the large number of food-supplying species growing there and the dense cover such plants provide near the ground around Medoc Mountain. Pine forest seedlings of the Loblolly Pine appear in the open fields about the same time as the shrubs and grasses, and within 10 years they will usually take over the area almost completely by virtue of their large numbers and greater height. Hardwood trees may come up with the young pines, but the faster growth rate of the pines gives them temporary superiority.

A great deal of land, especially on the west side of the park property across the two creeks, is densely covered with pine forest in various stages of growth, from stands that are very young and dense, perhaps less than 15 years old, to older but still dense stands (unthinned) that are competing fiercely among themselves for the precious open sunlight that pines must have in order to survive. In recent years, such crowded and over-mature pines stands have been prime targets for the destructive Southern Pine Beetles. A good-sized young pine plantation along Secondary Road 1322 just north of the Little Fishing Creek bridge is especially crowded and subject to beetle attack.

Few plants are to be found beneath these dense pines, but in the healthier pine stands of the area, several species of blueberries and such interesting herbaceous plants as Pipsissewa are common. By far the most interesting and unusual wildflower encountered in large numbers in the Medoc area in May is the showy, inflated pink Lady Slipper. Its presence is worth taking note of in planning the location of facilities because this plant's large size and showy nature make it highly subject to picking and digging. Although not rare, it deserves special protection.

The pine forest is not as productive for wildlife as other natural communities, owing to the small number of food-supplying plants. However, its dense crown growth provides good nesting and roosting habitat for owls, Gray Squirrels, and many small birds.

Mixed Forests

Much of the central part and the northern and southern ends of the Medoc Mountain property are covered with a sort of "melting pot" plant community — a mixture of hardwoods, Loblolly Pines, and shrub and herbaceous species all jumbled together, with most of the tree species still in early growth stages. Such areas are common in places where the hardwood forest has been clear-cut or heavily logged and the resulting stumps and damaged understory allowed to regenerate. A dense 10 - 25 years old stand of this type of mixed woods lines the road leading to the top of Medoc Mountain from the fire tower. Although not yet a particularly attractive forest, it does contain a considerable diversity of plant life, and the abundance of greenery close to the ground in such places provides a good browse for deer and Wild Turkeys that are found here. Rabbits and quail are also fairly common in the vicinity, as are such songbirds as the Brown Thrasher, Rufous-Sided Towhee and numerous species of warblers during the warmer months.

Flood Plain and Lowland Hardwood Forests

For planning purposes, the lowland hardwood and flood plain areas may be considered together. Both exhibit similar characteristics in vegetation and associated wildlife, the primary differences being wetter soils and more water-tolerant species in the flood plains.

Water Oak and Swamp Chestnut Oak are well-represented, as are the Sweet Gum and River Birch, the latter reaching a diameter of nearly 18" in the vicinity of Little Fishing Creek. The Ironwood also attains unusual size, often occurring among dense thickets of its common relative, the Speckled Alder.

Because the occasional floodwaters keep the ground cover of the flood plain in a state of flux, the greatest variety of annuals and other herbaceous plants in the entire area are to be found on the rich soil near the creeks. Poison-Ivy has densely invaded the low areas, but other more attractive plants may be found along the creek banks. One of the most common of these is the orange-flowered Jewelweed, a tall succulent-stemmed herb whose juices are a proven cure for the maladies of the Poison-Ivy that grows so profusely nearby.

Many wildflowers more commonly associated with the Piedmont occur along the creeks in the Medoc area. A great variety of interesting plants and animals in the immediate area frequent the narrow strip of land adjacent to the creeks. Less than ½ mile upstream from the junction of Bear Swamp and Little Fishing Creeks, along Bear Swamp Creek, a sizeable west-flowing tributary empties into the swamp and produces an extensive flood plain with considerable variety of wet-ground loving plants. Among the interesting ferns found here are very large Royal and Cinnamon Ferns, Netted Chain Fern and the delicate Lady Fern. A beautiful wildflower in the lily family, the False Solomon's Seal is a frequent sight in lowlying areas in May and June.

The large flood plain created at the junction of Bear Swamp Creek and Little Fishing Creek contains some of the largest trees in the area. Two large Oaks of more than 4 feet diameter at breast height are of special interest. Their leaves appeared to resemble the White Oak pattern, but the lobes were unusually short (1-2.5 cm.). White Oaks are known to hybridize with several other oaks, and these trees would certainly interest a botanist. Hybridization with the Swamp Chestnut Oak is possible, as are several other "combinations."

Along the eastern edge of this flood plain grow several attractive species of wildflowers more often found in upper piedmont and mountain locations. Atamasco Lilies, the large white-flowered "Easter Lilies" of the moist woodlands, are common in this spot, as are the peculiar umbrella-shaped May-Apples.

Although the bluffs and ravines in the Medoc area actually comprise a very small percentage of the total land-area, their distinctive character merits mentioning. The ravine extending westward down Medoc Mountain, and the bluff extending thence southward along Little Fishing Creek are the best examples of this quite attractive habitat. Although such moisture-loving trees as the Tulip Poplar and the Sweet Gum frequent the wet bottomlands adjacent to these areas and extend up the lower parts of the steep banks, the steepest areas are occupied primarily by two very attractive species, the American Beech and Mountain Laurel, along with some herbaceous plant species more commonly associated with true mountain areas.

The American Beech is the familiar smooth-barked "initial tree" which attains large size on banks with fairly rich soil. The rockiest areas are suitable for the Mountain Laurel, which decorates the steep ravine banks and outcrop areas with multitudes of pale-pink cup-shaped flowers in May and June. The occurrence of this highland species is not uncommon in the upper coastal plain, although large concentrations are unusual.

Upland Hardwood Forest

A considerable acreage extending from the north side of Medoc Mountain northward to the first sizeable tributary of Bear Swamp Creek, about ½ mile away, is covered with a fairly mature (40 - 75 year-old) forest of upland hardwoods. Many trees in this area are as much as 18" in diameter, with some much larger old homesite specimens.

Chestnut Oaks are common and well-developed on the ridge-tops and along the exposed slopes. Radford's *Manual of the Vascular Flora of the Carolinas* (1968) indicates that the Chestnut Oak generally does not occur farther east in North Carolina than Johnston, Wake, Vance, and Granville Counties, yet perhaps not surprisingly they are numerous on Medoc Mountain.

No Post Oaks were found in the Medoc area, but the other typcial Piedmont Oaks, especially the White, Northern Red, and Black Oaks are numerous. Large Mockernut Hickories and Red Maples join the Oaks in forming this upper canopy of trees.

As might be expected in such a well-established forest zone, the understory is quite diverse. In May the small Fringe-Tree makes a nice showing, with multitudes of white flowers hanging in long silky strands. Pinxter-Flower Azaleas are located abundantly in damp pockets on the lower hillsides, as are at least eight species of ferns. Blueberries and huckleberries are the real masters of the understory, however. The tall Sparkleberry and Squaw-Huckleberry may be seen in many places growing right above their smaller cousins, Dangleberry and tiny Dwarf Huckleberry.

The mature hardwood forests in the Medoc area, whether upland or lowland, harbor a great deal of wildlife. Descending from Medoc Mountain to the creeks, one passes from a woodland filled with the loud, continuous songs of the Red-Eyed Vireo and Wood Thrush to one similarly serenaded by the Louisiana Waterthrush and Prothonotary Warbler. Although not as common as other species of woodpeckers, the great Pileated is

nevertheless present in the area, and his vociferous drumming and calling is hard to miss.

The great numbers of deer tracks in both upland and lowland areas attest to the abundance of these shy creatures. At several points along Little Fishing Creek, deer trails cross the waterway, with deep paths cut into both banks. Wild turkeys, Gray Foxes, River Otter, and Mink are said to be in the area, although no definite evidence was located. Raccoons, Opossums, and Gray Squirrels are much in evidence throughout the area.

A survey conducted by the Wildlife Resources Commission of the fish populations of Fishing Creek in the area under consideration determined that 14% by number and 28% by weight of the fish are game species. For each 100 yards of stream there were found to be approximately 32 Redbreasted Sunfish (Robins), 4 Roanoke Bass, 3 Chain Pickerel, 1 Largemouth Bass, 1 Bluegill, and 2 other miscellaneous game fish — all of keeper size. The stream is lightly fished because of its inaccessibility and distance from major population centers. It is thought that the fish species composition of the streams in the Medoc Mountain State Park area are about the same, as that of Fishing Creek.[3]

A few hunters float Fishing Creek in the fall for duck hunting. The primary species taken is the Wood Duck, which frequents the waters of Fishing Creek and Little Fishing Creek year round. On a recent trip down a short section of the creek, a female Wood Duck with a brood not yet able to fly were observed, proving that these ducks are breeding in the area.

Other common birds along the river include the comical Spotted Sandpiper and such fish-eaters as the Green and Great Blue Herons and the ever-present Kingfisher. The Red-Shouldered Hawk's cat-like scream is frequently heard. As one rounds a bend, it is not unusual to flush a low-perched Great Horned or Barred Owl. (Portions taken from source #2).

Limitations on Developing Recreation Facilities

Analysis of the factors controlling development showed divisions of limitations ranging from slight to severe, and further indicated areas which should be preserved from any development.

Those ecological communities which should be preserved at Medoc Mountain include the north-sloping ravines and the thick mountain laurel growth usually associated with these slopes, the large rock outcrop alongside Little Fishing Creek, the outstanding flood plain areas on Bear Swamp Creek and Little Fishing Creek, and the areas with large number of Pink Lady Slipper Orchids.[2] These points should be avoided during location of facilities; however, they will be included in the overall interpretive program for the park.

The slight limitations on facility development are exhibited by the land with slopes ranging from 2 to 5 percent and sandy loam soils.[22] The hardwood forests and the mixed pine-hardwood forests also fit into this category.[2]

The land with coarse soils and slopes ranging from 5 percent to 15 percent is classified as exhibiting moderate limitations for facility development.[22] Also in this class are the mature pine forests and the old agricultural fields.[2]

Those areas with severe limitations are defined by the 100-year flood plain along Little Fishing Creek and Bear Swamp Creek, the dendritic system of the other tributaries feeding these creeks, and the grades which are 15 percent or greater. The young pine forests and the areas that have recently been cut for timber also impose severe limitations for recreation facility development.[2]

Of the 2,300 acres surveyed within the study area, 1,200 acres are suitable for recreational facility and activity development with only slight to moderate limitations. The remaining 1,100 acres are subject to severe limitations, and will be preserved or managed according to the limitation that determined the rating. The severe slopes and unique features should be preserved, while the young pine forest communities and clear cut areas can be managed and restored over the years to make them valuable for recreational developments.

MEDOC MOUNTAIN

STATE PARK halifax county, n.c.

0 500 1000 2000
Development Limitations for Park Facilities
Severe
100 Year Floodplain
15+ Percent Slope
Young Pine Forests & Clear Cuts
Moderate
5-10 Percent Slope on Coarse Soil
10-15 " " on Sandy Loam Soil
Eroded Agricultural Fields
Mature Pine Forest
Slight
2-8 Percent Slope on Sandy Loam Soil
Mature Hardwood & Mixed Pine and Hardwood Forests

MASTER PLAN

MEDOC MOUNTAIN MASTER PLAN

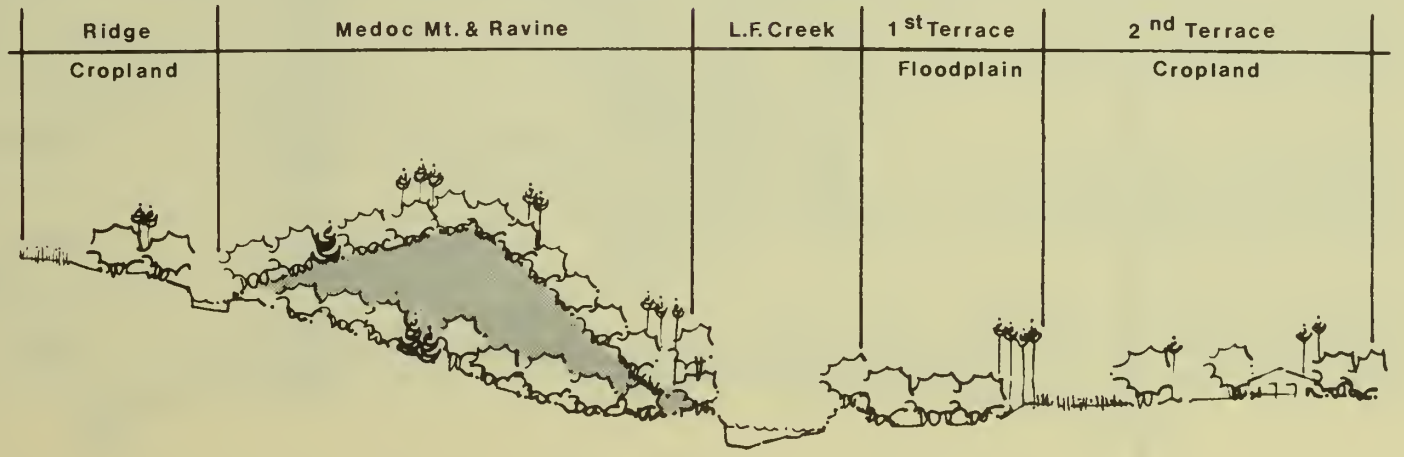
The most important duty of the Division of Parks and Recreation is to protect significant geological features, botanical communities or other features having important natural significance. Protection involves preservation of a unique feature or management of a significant wildlife habitat. In the case of Medoc Mountain, the peak and adjacent ravines will be preserved and managed for low intensity public use. Public use will involve provision of hiking and horseback riding trails, and rough camping facilities. These uses will be supplemented by a nature interpretation program designed to provide information to the public about the Mountain and the surrounding land. Free standing exhibits that identify unique and typical geologic outcrops, and wildlife habitats will be placed along self-guiding nature interpretation trails. Most of these trails are in existence and would require maintenance and soil stabilization. The county road which connects Medoc Mountain with S. R. 1002 will be closed and grassed, and kept as a fire lane. Vehicular access beyond the fire tower will be permitted in emergency situations and only under park supervision.

The second major responsibility of the Division is to provide public access and recreational programs that are compatible with the character of the area and its features. At Medoc, public access will be provided off N. C. 561. A new road, 1. 7 miles in length will be the main park entrance and spine road off which other activity areas will be located. The alignment, just east of Bear Swamp Creek, is proposed along an old farm road that has been overgrown.

A parking lot with an office for the Ranger/Naturalist will be located on the adjacent ridge north of Medoc Mountain. From this point, hiking trails will guide the park visitor to the Mountain and to other points of interest in the immediate area.

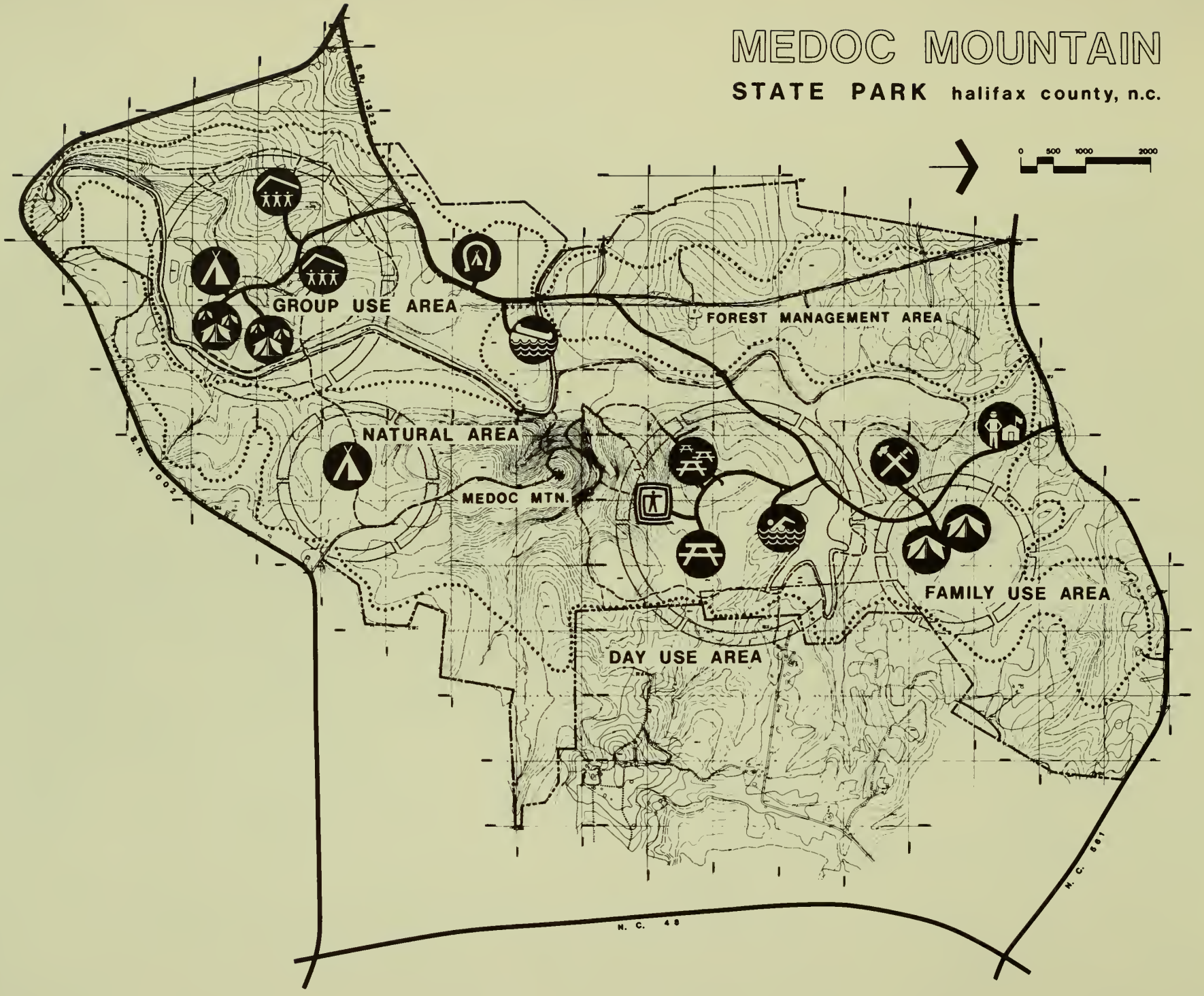
Approximately 12 miles of hiking trails will be provided over the entire site. These trails are designed to direct the park visitor to all scenic and recreational areas of the site. Every section of the Park is interconnected for pedestrian access and interpretation. All major recreational facilities (bathhouse, picnic area, tent and trailer camp, and interpretive station) will be made accessible to physically handicapped individuals. Special interpretive trails will be provided to expose the handicapped individuals (nonambulatory and blind) to the natural characteristics of the Park.

All primary hiking trails will be surfaced with wood chips, gravel, or other natural material. Heavily used trails suffering from soil erosion should be paved with asphalt if other alignments are not available. All trails for wheelchair individuals should be adequately surfaced with asphalt or other compacted material such as soil cement.



MEDOC MOUNTAIN

STATE PARK halifax county, n.c.



MASTER PLAN SYMBOLS KEY

DAY USE ACTIVITIES

In order to supplement the visitor's stay in the Park, natural base recreation activities are provided where compatible. Such activities include picnicking, swimming and boating, pleasure hiking, fishing and horseback riding. Since the immediate region is in need of both recreational open space and facilities, day use activities that are compatible with State Park principles will be proposed for park development. A major day use area, on the ridge north of Medoc Mountain, will consist of an area for family and group picnicking, and an impoundment for swimming, boating, and fishing.

Approximately thirty acres of picnicking will be provided along with a swimming beach that will accommodate 700 visitors per day. The proposed 18.1 acre impoundment could comfortably allow 12-14 rowboats without infringing upon the swimming area.[13]

Other day use activities included in the program are horseback riding and canoeing. A horseback riding camp and canoe launch will be provided just south of the bridge crossing Little Fishing Creek. The horse camp is located west, and the launch is just east of the main park road. Existing fields will be used for both activities, requiring only minor construction investment for access roads and parking facilities.

The horse camp will provide a parking lot for 38 cars and their trailers, and tie racks for 50 horses. A picnic area with vault-type toilets will be located a convenient distance from the parking lot. If demand indicates, tent camps could also be provided within the area.

Approximately 15 miles of horseback riding trails are designed into the system. For the most part, these trails follow the boundaries of the park and are designed as loop trails. Thus, the rider can choose a desired trail length to suit any time schedule.

The canoe launch is provided to encourage use of Little Fishing and Fishing Creeks. Since Fishing Creek from N. C. 561 to S. R. 1222, is a proposed Natural and Scenic River, public

access points will have to be developed. The concept of a water link along Little Fishing Creek to Fishing Creek from Medoc was introduced in 1972 by the Division of State Parks and given tentative approval by the Region L Council of Governments.

The unspoiled condition of the creek banks along this 13 mile section of Little Fishing Creek would make an ideal trip for amateur canoeists and their families. The water is extremely calm and slow moving with occasional snags.

A one-half day trip would end at S. R. 1338, and a one day trip of 16 miles would end at S. R. 1342 on Fishing Creek. Approximately 10 miles further downstream at S. R. 1222, an old mill site referred to as Gum Lake marks the end of the proposed scenic river proposal. The stone facade of the mill still remains and the existing dam appears to be in good condition. The area above and below the dam is used for swimming and fishing, and appears to have a high potential for use as a county recreation facility.

FAMILY CAMPING ACTIVITIES

Medoc Mountain State Park will also offer varied opportunities for camping in a natural setting. There will be tent and trailer camping for families and small groups as well as more primitive wilderness camping facilities.

The tent and trailer camping area is located just north of the proposed impoundment, with access via the main park road. Two loops of 40 sites are planned along with a washhouse for each loop. Every campsite will have a 12' x 15' tent pad, a cooking grill, a picnic table, and a 50' pull-off for trailers. The individual sites are to be placed approximately 100 feet apart along the loop road, and each loop is located from 200 to 300 feet off the main park road.

Wilderness campsites will provide a more primitive experience in the wild. These sites will be located along hiking trails in clusters of five. Each site will have only a clearing for a tent and a fire. All sites within the cluster are to be placed one acre apart, with each cluster provided with a centralized water supply and vault privies.

Two wilderness camps consisting of two to three clusters (10-15 sites) are proposed. One camp is to be located within the proposed natural area on the Medoc Mountain ridge and the other is located across Little Fishing Creek in the group use area. Access to the camps will be allowed only by foot. A hike of one mile is required into the natural area on the Mountain, and a shorter hike is required of the other camping area.

GROUP USE ACTIVITIES

For organized group users such as the Scouts or 4-H'ers, group day camping and tent camping facilities will be available by reservation, designed to accommodate 150 campers at one time. The day camp will occupy approximately 5 acres, with 2 acres of open space for informal games. Also, each day camp will have a shelter of 1,800 square feet, a water supply, and vault privies.

The group tent camp is designed to handle groups of up to 75 people who cannot or do not desire a hike to their camp. Usually groups of this size carry extensive amounts of equipment that prohibit hikes of any length. Approximately 5 acres of land would be required for the camping area and common open space. Users will be allowed to organize themselves on the site, choosing the location for individual tents. Only common space for cooking, a camp circle, and open space for informal games would be designated.

The group day camps and tent camps are isolated in one area of the park in order to separate the large groups from family area. The place chosen for the group is west of Little Fishing Creek on cleared farmland; therefore, open space is already available for use in a group camp situation. Two group tent and day camps are proposed, along with the family wilderness camp. The tent camps are isolated at the terminus of the park road and the day camps are located further west along the same road. Ample buffer is provided between the camps to insure privacy.

PARK MANAGEMENT

In order to protect the Park and manage the recreational activities, only a single park entrance is planned. Other access points along N. C. 561 and S. R. 1002 will be closed, and S. R. 1322 will be removed from the State Highway System. The park office and information center are combined in one building located just south of the new entrance. This office will be the main visitor and administrative center for all park affairs. Camping permits, public information, and other public requests will be handled through this office.

Maintenance is one of the single most important functions of the park staff. The physical appearance and condition of the Park can greatly influence the park visitor's attitude while he is in the Park. For this reason, a rigorous maintenance program is required.

The location of the maintenance area must reflect the use patterns within the Park. Therefore, convenience to the major use areas becomes the deciding factor for its location. Storage space for park supplies, equipment, and vehicles along with a workshop for minor machinery repair and park construction will be provided in the building. This use will be located opposite the family tent and trailer camp along the main park entrance. It will be in close proximity to the day use and family camping areas. Combined, these two areas represent the major uses of the Park.

Presently, two residences exist on the southern boundary of the Park along S. R. 1002. One of the homes is currently being used as a temporary park office. The other residence is owned by State Parks, and will be vacated before the end of 1975. It will be used as the superintendent's family residence. Any other residences needed for permanent employees will be provided within the maintenance area complex.

SERVICES TO PARK USERS

Programs which have been established and are currently practiced in other state parks, particularly those for visitor protection and law enforcement, must be emphasized at Medoc Mountain State Park. The legal authority vested in park personnel stands as an effective means of controlling misuse of the Park and unwanted encroachment upon its land.

The patrol of the Park by personnel should be conducted systematically to include not only designated use areas and roads, but also the various hiking and bridle trails, and the Park boundaries. The mobile units used for this patrolling should be radio equipped, as should the park office. A good working relationship with local law enforcement agencies should be actively pursued.

A fire control plan, utilizing existing roads, paths, trails, and easements, should be developed with the assistance of the Division of Forest Resources. Fire-fighting equipment should be stored at readily accessible points around the park.

A well-designed and up-to-date information service for park visitors is essential. Visitors should be well-oriented to the location of park facilities and programs, trails, features, and regulations and philosophy. Orientation to the park plan and information services will be provided both in the park office and at the interpretive station, with supplementary information being available at the various use areas. Trail booklets will be available showing the location of the hiking and equestrian trails, and the self-guiding interpretive trail. The pamphlets describing the points of interest on the interpretive trail will be provided at the interpretive station. All booklets and pamphlets should stress the delicate qualities of the various plants found along the trails, and should point out that collecting or molesting any of the flora and fauna in the park is strictly prohibited.

PARK USE FIGURES

Proposed park development totals just over 190 acres. This figure includes use areas, road alignments and all park trails. The percentage of land developed is estimated to be a little over 7 percent of the total land area in the park. If buffer acreage for the park boundary and entrance road is subtracted, approximately 440 acres, the development percentage increases to 7.5 percent. Both figures fall within suitable development limits for a state park, which generally range from 5 to 10 percent of total park acreage.[16]

A substantial nature area around Medoc Mountain will be protected, and a 500 acre tract on the northern boundary west of Bear Swamp Creek will require reforestation and timber management in order to regain a natural character. Part of this area was previously clear-cut and the remainder, primarily old eroded pasture, is now a dense young pine community.

The proposed facilities are designed to accommodate an optimum of approximately 1,300 day users per day and 500 overnite users. These figures reflect projected group uses which average about one percent of the total park use. Using these figures, just under 70 percent of the total park visitation is day use, and the remaining 30 percent is overnite use. Combining these daily use figures with the average seasonal visitations of similar state parks renders a yearly use figure ranging from 200,000 to 300,000 visitors per year.[13]

INTERIM USE FACILITIES

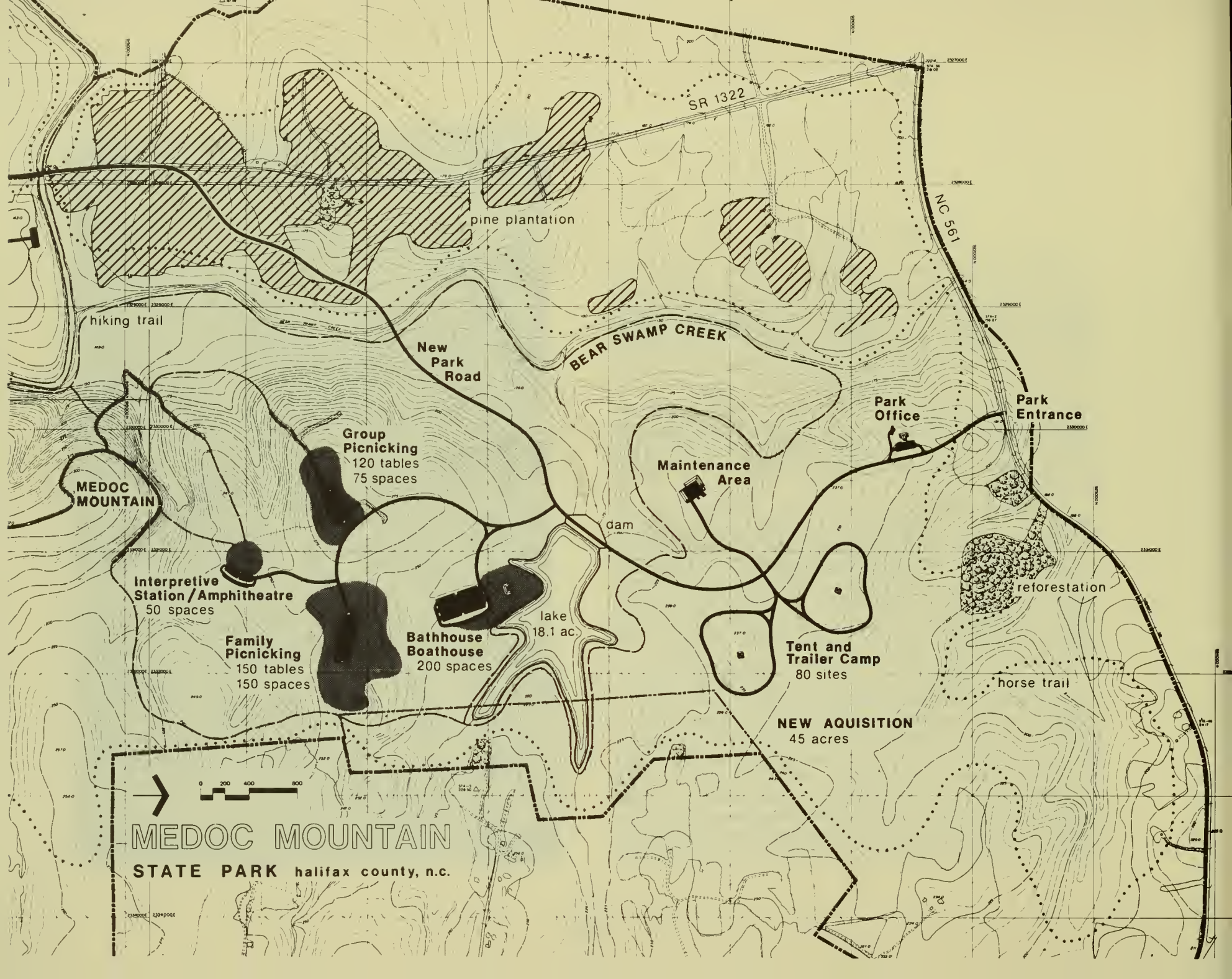
Before major park development begins, interim use facilities will be opened at Medoc. A temporary family picnic area with tables, a well, and 2 privies will be located at the terminus of S. R. 1347 in the proposed group use area. This site was previously an old homesite with adjacent fallow fields. Parking will be provided in part of the field, and the remainder will be mowed regularly for informal game activities.

Five wilderness camps will also be located in the general vicinity, southeast of the picnic area. Each of the 5 camping sites will be cleared, and provided with a cooking grill, and common water source and privy. Parking spaces will be accommodated in the family picnic lot.

In order to control use of this area, a park gate will be placed on S. R. 1347, and the road will be removed from the maintenance schedule of the Department of Transportation. A residence on S. R. 1002 that was purchased for the State Park has been converted into a temporary park office and maintenace area. Even though major facilities are not being provided at this phase of development, the hiking and bridle trails can be laid out and constructed. Approximately 12 miles of hiking trails and 15 miles of bridle paths will be provided when completed.

S. R. 1323, the road to Medoc Mountain, will be partially closed. Vehicular access to the main peak will not be permitted. A park gate will be placed along this road just beyond the fire tower. A temporary parking lot will be located in an abandoned field immediately south of the first peak. The remainder of the road will be used as a hiking trail to the Mountain.

In the remaining time before park development, all site debris will be removed, a forest management study will be initiated, and a water reclassification proposal for Bear Swamp Creek will also be finalized.


SR 1322
NC 561
pine plantation
hiking trail
New Park Road
BEAR SWAMP CREEK
Park Office
Park Entrance
Maintenance Area
Group Picnicking
120 tables
75 spaces
MEDOC MOUNTAIN
dam
Interpretive Station / Amphitheatre
50 spaces
reforestation
lake
18.1 ac.
Family Picnicking
150 tables
150 spaces
Bathhouse
Boathouse
200 spaces
Tent and Trailer Camp
80 sites
horse trail
NEW AQUISITION
45 acres
0 200 400 800
MEDOC MOUNTAIN
STATE PARK halifax county, n.c.

DAY USE AND FAMILY CAMPING SITE PLAN

The permanent park office will be located about 500 feet from N. C. 561 on the new asphaltic park road. This facility will be no larger than 1,500 square feet, and will house administrative and information functions for the park. Permits for camping, assignment of day camps, and reservations will be handled through this ofice. Parking will be provided for 15 cars and 4 car/trailers or buses, along with 6 spaces for park staff. The maintenance area, containing repair facilities, a workshop, and storage, along with the park barracks and residences, if needed, will be situated off the main entrance road.

The tent and trailer campground is located directly across the road from the maintenance area and close to the park office. This facility consists of two 40 site camping loops and a washhouse for each. The camping loops will be developed as demand increases. Each loop of 40 campsites and washhouse is designed to accommodate 140 visitors, and will require approximately 15 acres of land. Total development will require 30 to 40 acres, plus sufficient natural buffer for road noise along N. C. 561 and the park road.[13]

The park road continues southward, winding along the topography, until it crosses the dam for the 18 acre recreation impoundment, beside the ridge immediately north of Medoc Mountain. The visitor will be directed to the major day use area at this point. Turning left, the road forks after a short drive. The left fork leads to the 200 car parking lot for the bathhouse, boathouse, and the lake. The bathhouse will be designed to serve approximately 700 swimmers each day, necessitating a beach 50 feet wide and approxiamtely 700 feet long. All swimmers will be required to register at the bathhouse before changing, and lifeguards will be provided for their protection.

The bathhouse will accommodate a variety of services, including changing rooms for the swimmers, refreshments, registration for fishermen, and boating permits. Fees for these activities, where required, will be collected at the bathhouse. The boathouse on the 18 acre lake will be for storage and protection of the 14 boats which will be rented for public use. Both the boathouse and the docking facilities for launching and retrieving the rental boats will be enclosed for protection. Fishing could be allowed from either the rental boats or the lake banks, depending on the demand, but in no case would private boating be allowed on the impoundment.

The right fork of the road serving the day use area will provide access to the group picnicking area, the family picnicking area, and the interpretive station. All of these activities are well separated from each other to minimize noise interference. The group picnicking area will cover approximately 10 acres, serving a maximum of 420 people at one time and will contain 120 tables, a comfort station, and shelter and parking for 75 cars and 6 buses. The family picnic ground will take about 25 acres and serve a maximum of 525 people at one time. This area will have 150 tables, two comfort stations, and 150 parking spaces.[13]

The interpretive station will be the beginning point for the one mile self-guided interpretive trail, and will have a 750 square foot workshop/museum for the Ranger/Naturalist and parking for 50 visitor spaces and 3 bus spaces. In conjunction with the interpretive station, an amphitheatre seating approximately 150 persons will be provided for nature talks, visual presentations and lectures. The self-guiding interpretive trail will begin here, covering such environs as the stream at the foot of Medoc Mountain, the mountain peak, the mountain laurel ravine and rock outcrop, and flood plain between Little Fishing Creek and Bear Swamp Creek.

Group Day Camp
50 spaces
1 shelter
NEW ACQUISITION
60 Acres
pine plantation
SR1347
horse trail
Horse Camp
38 trailer sp.
10 tables
10 camp sites
Wilderness Camp
10-15 sites
reforest
Group Day Camp
50 spaces
1 shelter
SR1322
LITTLE FISHING CK.
Group Tent Camps
50 spaces
12 sites
Canoe Launch
25 spaces
reforest
SR1002
hiking trail
MEDOC MT.
NATURAL AREA
Wilderness Camp
15 sites
SR1323
0 200 400 800
MEDOC MOUNTAIN
STATE PARK halifax county, n.c.

GROUP USE AND FAMILY WILDERNESS CAMPING SITE PLAN

The park spine road will continue on from the dam, across a bridge over Bear Swamp Creek, tying into the existing roadbed of S. R. 1322, going past the canoe launch and camp, the equestrian area and camp, and then terminating at the group camp facilities. The canoe activity area will include a camping area approximately 3 acres in size with toilet and water facilities, a launch area of about 2 acres, and 25 parking spaces. Amateur canoeists will be able to camp here overnite or picnic, and then launch their canoes for a trip down Little Fishing Creek.

The equestrian activity area, further down the main park road, will provide 10 picnic tables, water and toilet facilities, hitching posts for 50 horses and parking for 38 vehicles with trailers. Overnight facilities will be 10 tent and trailer sites slightly separated from the daylight use. Equestrian trails will branch out from this facility, generally staying close to the park boundaries. Loop trails will be available, making the length of riding trails about 15 miles.

The group recreation facilities are clustered at the end of the park road for privacy. The two tent camps and the two day camps are located a minimum of 500 feet apart to reduce the noise problems associated with group activities. The group day camps will each have an 1800 square foot shelter and toilet and water facilities. There will be at least 2 acres of open fields for informal games at each camp and each will serve up to 150 people on a reserved basis. Fields not needed for activities or parking lots will be reforested.

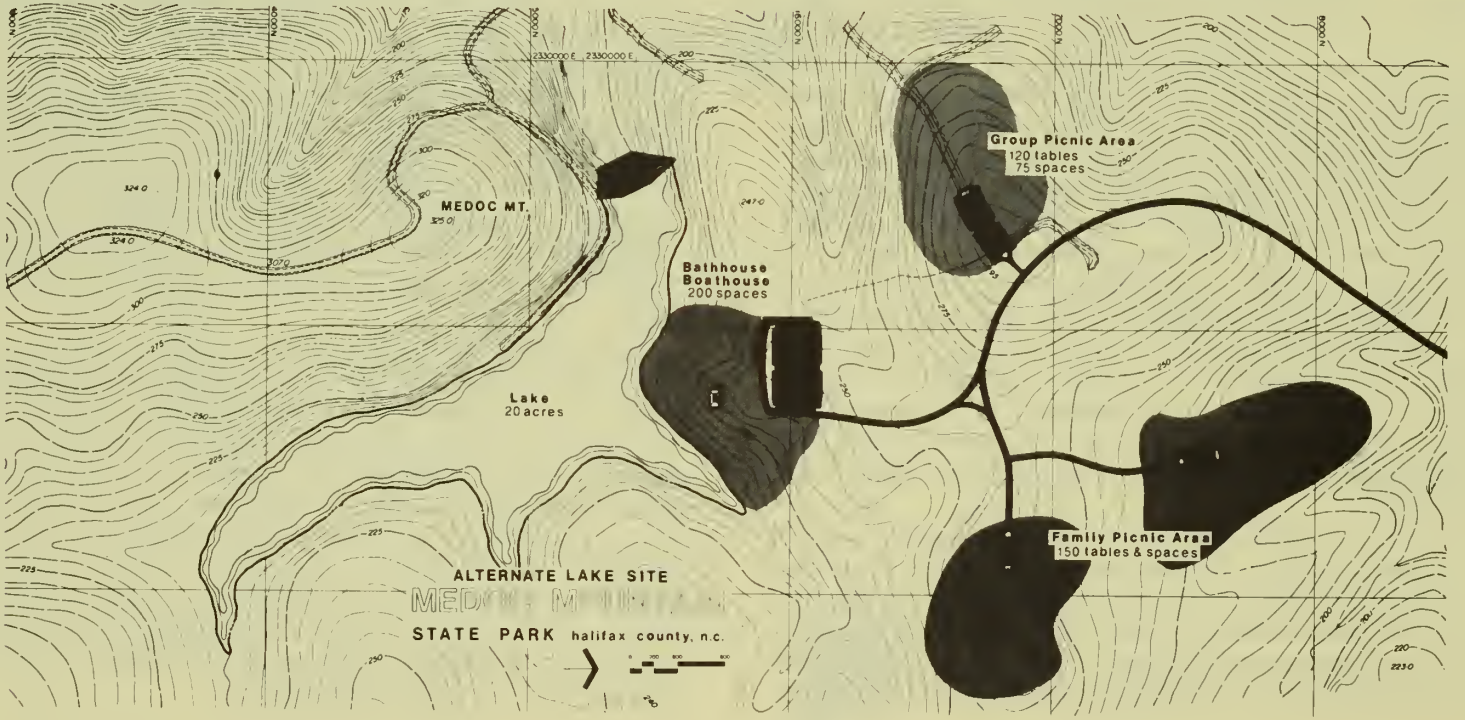
The group tent camps are planned to serve approximately 75 people each, necessitating parking for 50 cars and 3 buses. Each tent camp will take up 4 to 5 acres and will have anywhere from 12 to 15 campsites. Two acres of open space will be provided for each camp, with the remainder of any open areas being reforested. Each tent camp will have its own circle for cooking and assembling, along with its own water supply and toilets.

Two family wilderness camps will be provided, one fairly close to the group use area, and the other on the eastern side slope of the Mountain itself. Each camp will have from 10 to 15 sites at a density of one site per acre. Toilet facilities and a water supply will be available at both camps. The major difference in the two sites is their relative "wilderness" situation. The camp in the group use area will be less remote than the camp on the Mountain; the wilderness camping on Medoc Mountain will require a one mile hike to reach the sites, while the other wilderness camp will only be a few hundred feet from the parking lot. Parking for the Medoc Mountain wilderness camp will be In the parking lot at the interpretive station.

LAND ACQUISITION

Acquisition of approximately 192 acres is necessary to implement Phase I of the park development. This final total will depend on which impoundment is suitable for development; however, regardless of this decision, approximately 147 acres will be needed for other areas of the Park. All of this land lies adjacent or close to S. R. 1322 on the western boundary of the Park. In order to close this road and make it a park road only, 60 acres on the south side of Little Fishing Creek will be needed to give the Park control of both sides of the right-of-way. An additional 87 acres (approximately) will be needed on the north side of the creek, removing the requirement for access to this property from S. R. 1322.

If the proposed impoundment site in the day use area is used, additional 45 acres of acquisition will be needed to establish sufficient buffer around the lake, picnic area, and the tent and trailer camping area. This acreage reflects a 400 feet wide protective strip around these use areas to reduce siltation and runoff, noise pollution, and visual encroachment, along with preserving the wilderness character of the Park. If the impoundment site immediately beside the Mountain is used, a sufficient amount of land has already been purchased to provide this protective strip. The original proposal would mean a total acquisition of 192 acres; the alternative would reduce this figure to 147 acres, but would also substantially reduce the size of the natural area around Medoc Mountain. The original proposal completely avoids this destruction, moving the heavy uses away from the Mountain, and thereby substantially increasing the size of the natural area around the peak.



UTILITIES

Electrical power and telephone service are available through Carolina Power & Light Company and Bell Telephone Company respectively. Lines for both power and telephone presently run through and adjacent to State Park property. All lines within Park property are to be placed underground.

Water demand for the day use area, bathhouse, comfort station, and interpretive station is estimated at 50,000 gallons per day. This amount will probably be supplied by a series of wells within the immediate area. Since the well capacities have fluctuated greatly within the area, it is unlikely that one well would satisfy this demand.

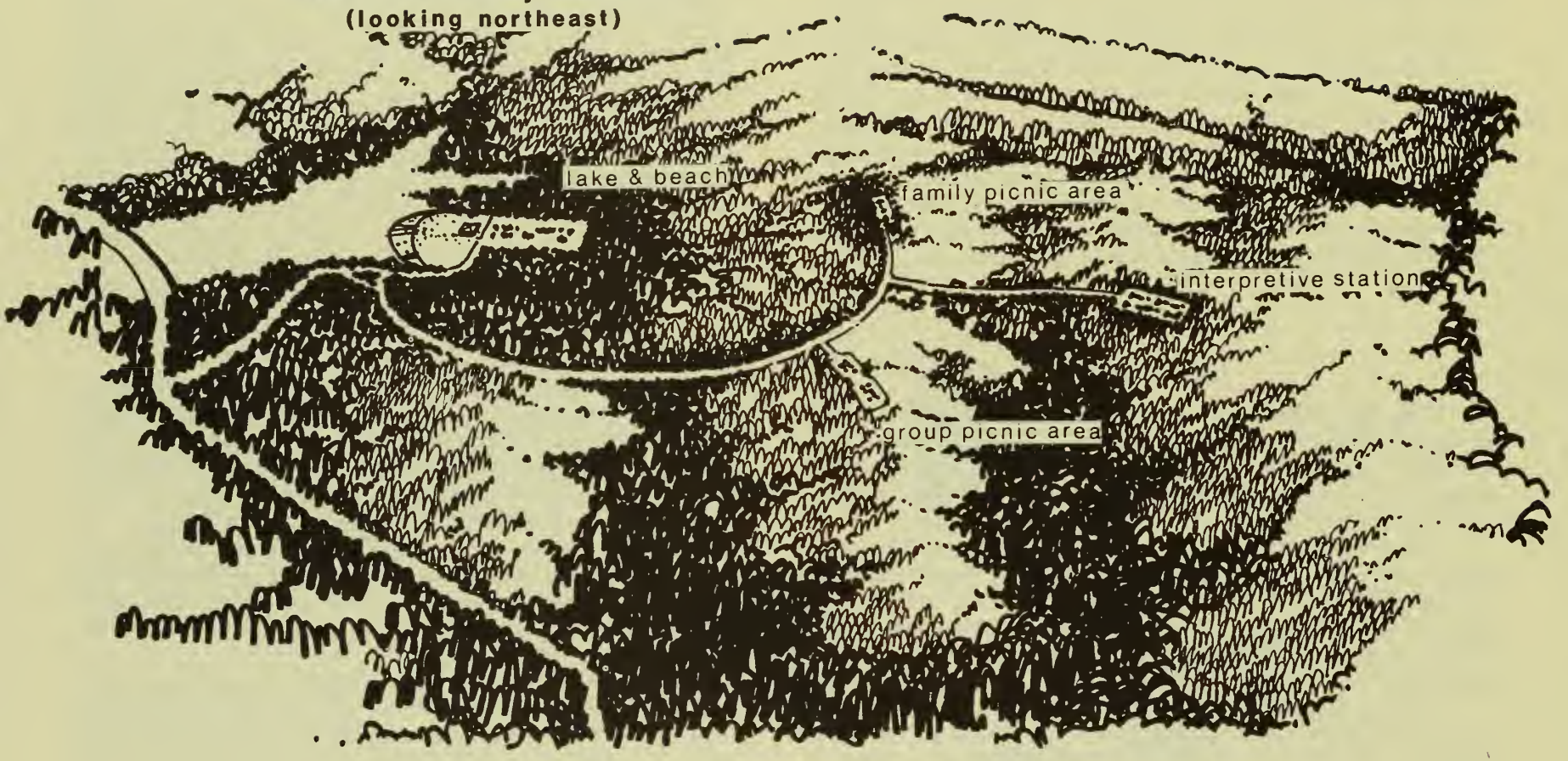
Water supply needed for each washhouse in the family tent and trailer camping area is estimated to be 25,000 gallons per day when operating at capacity. Each washhouse would more than likely require a separate well supplying 20-30 gallons per minute.

The combined maintenance area and park barracks would require a water supply of 1,500 gallons per day, and the park office needs approximately 500 gallons per day. A well of 10-15 gallons per minute is required for each area. The main group camp area comprising 2 tent camps and 2 day camps would require less than a 1,000 gallons per day since flush toilets would not be provided. Depending on capacity, a well of 15-20 gallons per minute would service the entire area, or a smaller well of 5-10 gallons per minute would be needed for each camp.

Sewage disposal for the developed areas will be by septic tank and tile fields. According to soil reports, septic tanks and drain fields should meet existing health codes. However, final design and location are subject to review and inspection by the Halifax County Board of Health.

The bathhouse would require a 5,000 gallon septic tank and each washhouse and dump station needs a tank of 3,000 gallon capacity. Each camping loop would have a common drainage field. The maintenance area and park barracks would also have a common drainage field along with septic tanks of 500 and 1,000 gallons respectively. The park office would require a separate 750 gallon septic tank and drainage field. The group tent and day camps will be provided with vault-type privies, as will the picnic grounds in the day-use area.

Medoc Mt.– Day Use Area
(looking northeast)



DEVELOPMENT PHASING

INTERIM USE FACILITIES

1. Picnicking Area (temporary)
   terminus of S. R. 1347
   6 tables
   parking (gravel)
   10 visitor spaces

2. Wilderness Camping
   5 sites 1 site/acre
   cooking grill
   parking - in picnic area lot

3. Hiking Trails
   12 miles
   2 footbridges over Little Fishing Creek
   self-guided interpretive trail
   1 mile

4. Bridle Trails
   15 miles
   2 fording points

PHASE I

Land Acquisition 192.10 Acres

1. New Road Construction (Spine Road through park)
   paving (existing road) — 1.0 miles
   construction and paving — 2.3 miles
   total 3.3 miles
   earthen dam design and construction
   bridge over Bear Swamp Creek
   close Secondary Roads 1322 and 1323

2. Impoundment Site
   clearing of vegetation
   grading of beach area

3. Lake Day Use Area
   bathhouse
   700 linear feet of beach
   50 feet wide
   boathouse and shelter
   storage for 14 boats
   parking (paved)
   100 visitor spaces
   5 bus spaces
   3 staff spaces

4. Temporary Park Office and Maintenance Area
   administration/visitor information
   permits: camping
   parking (gravel)
   15 visitor spaces
   4 car/trailer/bus spaces
   6 staff spaces

5. Picnicking Area (Temporary)
   adjacent to Lake Day Use Area
   100 tables

6. Group Day Camp #1
   (1) shelter — 1800 sq. ft.
   150 people
   open space — 2 acres
   parking (gravel)
   50 visitor spaces
   3 bus spaces

7. Group Tent Camp #1
   12-15 sites
   4-5 acres
   open space — 2 acres
   parking (gravel)
   50 visitor spaces
   3 bus spaces

8. Family Wilderness Camping Area #1
   10-15 sites 1 site/acre
   parking (gravel)
   20 visitor spaces

9. Equestrian Area
   hitching posts for 50 horses
   10 picnic tables
   parking (gravel)
   38 car/trailer spaces

10. Canoe Activity Area
    launch area — 2 acres
    camping area — 3 acres
    parking (gravel)
    25 visitor spaces

PHASE II

1. New Road Construction (to Picnic Area & Interpretive Station)
   construction and paving — 1 mile

2. Park office (permanent)
   administration/visitor information
   permits: camping
   site reservations
   assignment of day camps
   parking (paved)
   15 visitor spaces
   4 car/trailer/bus spaces
   6 staff spaces

3. Expansion of Lake Day Use Area parking
   expand to 200 visitor spaces and pave

4. Group Picnicking Area
   120 tables 7-10 acres 1 shelter
   75 visitor spaces
   3 bus spaces
   420 people/4 hours 840 people maximum

5. Family Picnicking Area
   150 tables 25 acres 2 shelters
   150 visitor spaces
   525 people/4 hours 1050 people maximum

6. Interpretive Station
   self-guiding interpretive trail
   1 mile (from phase 1)
   workshop for Ranger-Naturalist
   parking (paved)
   50 visitor spaces
   3 bus spaces

7. Maintenance Building and Barracks
   (if needed)

8. Group Day Camp #2
   (1) shelter — 1800 sq. ft.
   150 people
   open space 2 acres
   parking (gravel)
   50 visitor spaces
   3 bus spaces

9. Group Tent Camp #2
   12-15 sites
   4-5 acres
   open space — 2 acres
   parking (gravel)
   50 visitor spaces
   3 bus spaces

10. Family Wilderness Camping Area #2
    10-15 sites 1 site/acre
    parking
      interpretive station parking lot
      20 visitor spaces
11. Equestrian Camping Area
    50 horse group
    10 tent and trailer sites
    2 acres
12. Family Tent and Trailer Camping
    loop #1 — 40 sites
    washhouse
    15 acres/loop

PHASE III

1. Paving of Parking Lots
   all remaining gravel lots
2. Family Tent and Trailer Camping
   loop #2 — 40 sites
   washhouse
   15 acres/loop

Reforestation
  continuous through all phases
  performed as necessary for development
  total area needing restoration — 65 acres

Forest Management
  continuous through all phases
  pine forests and cut areas
    managed for hardwoods
  total area needing management — 500 acres

PERSONNEL STAFFING

PHASE I	
Permanent	Park Superintendent (existing)
	Park Ranger II (2)
Seasonal	Park Attendant (6 months) (existing)
	Park Attendant (21)
	Park Naturalist
	Chief Lifeguard
	4 Lifeguards
	Refreshment Stand Manager
	Refreshment Stand Clerk
	Bathhouse Manager
	Bathhouse Operator
	Typist Clerk I
Temporary	Labor Support (as needed)
PHASE II	
Permanent	Ranger Naturalist
	Typist Clerk II
Temporary	Labor Support (as needed)
PHASE III	
Permanent	Maintenance Mechanic II
	General Utility Man
Seasonal	Recreator
Temporary	Labor Support (as needed)

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